



Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Office of International Labor Affairs

Promoting U.S. Foreign Policy on Labor Affairs

The State Department's Office of International Labor Affairs (ILA) strengthens respect for labor rights and advances workplace democracy in the global economy. ILA initiatives further U.S. foreign policy goals related to human rights, democracy promotion, trade, and sustainable growth. The office, which is part of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), also helps to implement the agenda of the Department's Special Representative for International Labor Affairs.

International Labor Engagement

ILA efforts focus on promoting internationally recognized worker rights, such as freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and the elimination of forced labor, child labor, and discrimination. In carrying out its work, ILA collaborates with NGOs, trade unions, companies, international organizations, and fellow U.S. federal agencies. Major activities include:

- **Labor Rights Reporting:** Each year, DRL produces the Department of State's *Annual Country Reports of Human Rights Practices*, which includes a comprehensive overview of worker rights in over 190 countries. The report is a vital tool for raising awareness of egregious abuses worldwide and is used widely to inform U.S. trade and economic policy.
- **Social Dialogue:** In addition to regular engagement to promote labor issues and defend human rights activists, DRL leads and participates in bilateral dialogues on human rights and labor rights, with China, Vietnam, and other countries.
- **Trade:** ILA helps to negotiate and implement the labor provisions of U.S. free trade agreements and trade preference programs related to Colombia, Guatemala, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a range of other countries.
- **Supply Chains:** ILA works with companies and NGOs to strengthen efforts to combat exploitative and hazardous working conditions in global supply chains.

- **Convening:** ILA hosts multi-stakeholder discussions to raise awareness and share best practices for combating labor abuses. Recent events have focused on forced labor in Uzbekistan, child labor in cocoa production, and company monitoring efforts of working conditions.
- **Multilateral Diplomacy:** ILA collaborates closely with the Department of Labor to represent the United States and to advance worker rights at the International Labor Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and other multilateral institutions.
- **Economic Policy:** ILA helps to develop U.S. international economic policy for the G20 and the OECD related to labor and employment policies in the global economy.

Embassy Labor Officers

ILA helps to coordinate and support the work of Labor Officers and other staff covering labor issues in U.S. missions throughout the world. DRL sponsors an annual Award for Excellence in Labor Diplomacy, a two-week course at the Foreign Service Institute on Labor Officer Skills, and regional conferences. In 2010, ILA conducted training sessions for officers in Cairo, Bangkok, and Miami. (Please see our factsheet on *Labor Diplomacy*.)

Technical Cooperation Programs

DRL provides millions of dollars in funding each year for projects that advance worker rights, build the capacity of independent unions, improve labor rights in supply chains, and promote dialogue among workers, employers, and governments. (Please see our factsheet on *Global Labor Programs*.)

Contact For more information about the work of the State Department's Office of International Labor Affairs, please contact labor@state.gov